

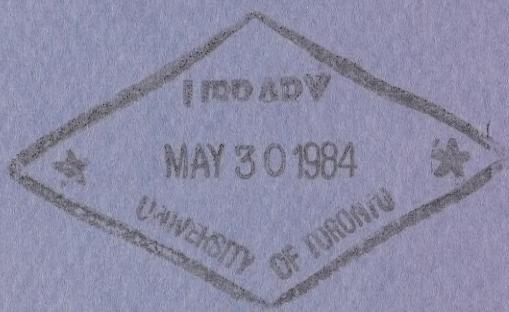
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A
DECISION MAKER'S
GUIDE TO FITNESS
IN THE WORKPLACE



Ontario
Ministry of
Tourism and
Recreation





INTRODUCTION

In 1972, PARTICIPaction startled millions of us with the revelation that the average 60 year old Swede was in better physical condition than the average 30 year old Canadian.

The comparison was not without creative license.

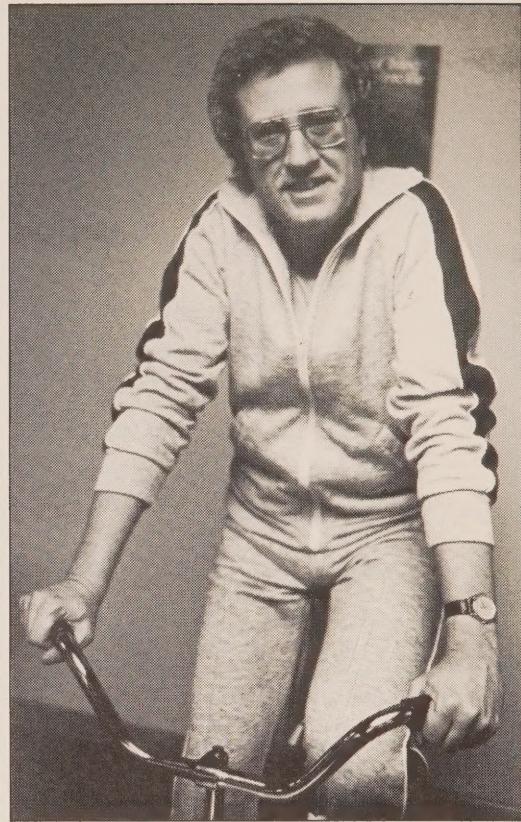
However, the message worked. It made all of us who saw or heard it think — at least momentarily — about our collective physical condition.

Today, we know that Canadians are generally more physically active. And specifically in Ontario, we know residents of the province are more active than ever before. It is not a passing fad. Increased physical activity, and with it the benefits of fitness, has become a way of life with well over half of all the people in Ontario.

But there is more that should be done, especially in the workplace.

The interest is evident. A recent survey of 1000 Ontario companies revealed that 15 per cent of those polled already had fitness programs in place, and that an additional 45 percent were interested in the possibility of introducing a fitness/recreation program.

This primer, prepared by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, is intended to serve as a guide to fitness in the workplace, specifically in today's climate of economic restraint.



City of Toronto

The late Graham Emslie, Commissioner of Property for the City of Toronto, was an able administrator. He was also a gifted salesman. And a strong believer in physical fitness, he undertook to persuade the municipal powers-that-be that fellow employees would benefit greatly from a regular exercise program. No easy task. His mission was accomplished when the City of Toronto Fitness Centre opened in a space the new City Hall previously used for storage.

Mayor Art Eggleton was among the first to acknowledge Emslie's foresight.

"Having a fitness facility here in the building makes it easier for employees. They can work out on their own time or take part in our fitness classes," says the Mayor. "It's great for employees as keeping fit keeps us healthier and happier."

Each prospective Fitness Centre member must complete a questionnaire which includes the Par Q, Risk Q screening, nutrition and lifestyle questions. After this, there is a mandatory fitness assessment which measures body fat, girth, flexibility, respiratory function, muscular strength, blood pressure, cardiovascular factor and target heart rate. The result is a program, designed by a fitness coordinator, to meet the individual's needs.

Members are required to keep a log recording progress made in their personal programs. Failure to participate for two consecutive months, triggers a follow-up by the fitness coordinator. Dropouts find their places quickly filled from a long waiting list of would-be members.

The Centre is open to civic employees, council members and members of the City Hall press bureau as well as to retired employees who enjoy a 50 per cent reduction in the bi-weekly fee of \$5.00. Members can participate in any of seven classes conducted daily by qualified fitness instructors or make use of gym and weight equipment to meet individual needs.

Today, the Centre boasts some 500 enthusiastic patrons including founding member Mayor Eggleton who has this to say: "People generally respond well to the need for exercise. I either play tennis or workout in the morning and couldn't do without it. Exercise gives me a physical and also a psychological boost to get started for the day."

WHAT

Fitness, very simply put, is a state of physical well-being. It's a very personal state, because each one of us is different in terms of size, shape and metabolism.

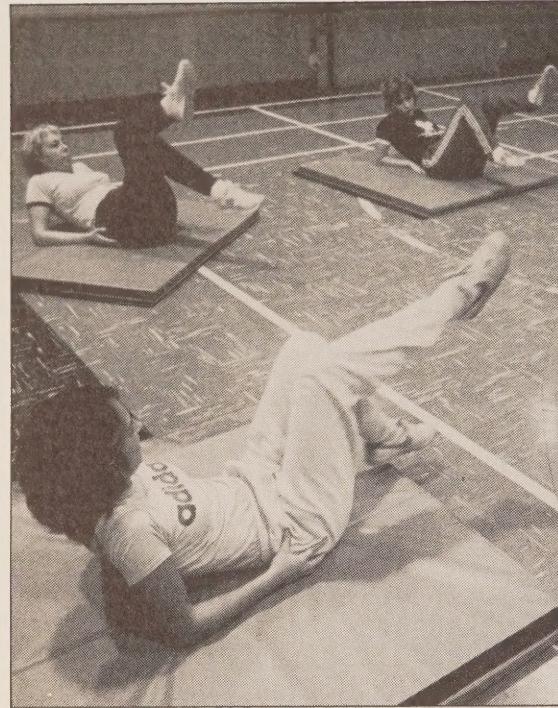
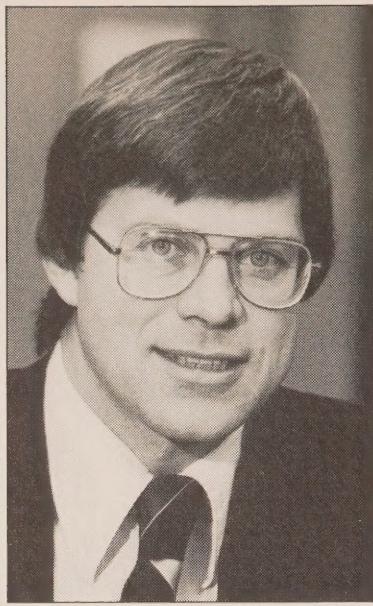
Sometimes, we think we're fit because we are reasonably active, or because we play a sport with some regularity.

But the secret to fitness is regular physical activity at a personal pace that results in improved aerobic capacity, better muscle tone, more stamina and, as a result, a healthier body that functions more efficiently.

Unfortunately, for most of us fitness is a somewhat elusive state. Worst of all, we perceive fitness as something we have to "work at" to achieve and maintain.

Yet fitness — that state of physical well-being — is perhaps one of the most important personal investments we can make...and the rewards are life-long.

By introducing a program of physical activity in the workplace, or by encouraging regular physical activity for employees, you are investing in their well-being, and in the well-being of the company.



Wellington County Board of Education

When the Wellington County Board of Education opened the former Brighton Street Public School as an education centre it was to house consultants and coordinators and serve as a teacher training centre. But Dave Massey, health curriculum coordinator, realized that he and other Board employees were spending a great deal of time behind their desks and not getting the exercise they needed for an acceptable level of fitness.

With assistance from Wintario to purchase equipment and Board employees to do the labour, they turned an unused Grade 2 classroom into a fitness facility complete with a global gym and an area for individual fitness testing. Showers were installed in existing washrooms by the volunteer group. Using the former classroom and the school gym, Dave Massey began the employee fitness program for Board employees. This has now been expand-

ed to include evenings for spouses as well as teachers and principals.

Mr. Massey explained how it operates. "The program is staffed by an employee fitness coordinator — trained through the Fitness Ontario Leadership Program — with the assistance of the Ontario Career Action Plan. The fitness coordinator is currently assisted by a cardiopulmonary resuscitation coordinator who conducts fitness classes and teaches CPR to employees, and a Grade 12 co-op student from a local high school.

The programs offered — during lunch hours, after work, or evenings — include a general conditioning regime, introductory fitness, weight training, cardiopulmonary resuscitation courses and stress management, as well as recreational activities such as volleyball, floor hockey, soccer, baseball, basketball, and cross-country skiing.

"We conduct an interest survey twice a year to determine if we are meeting the needs of the participants and to see if there is sufficient interest in special programs such as weight control and stopping smoking," notes Mr. Massey. "We are open to all suggestions."

The employee fitness program utilizes not only the indoor facilities of the former school but also the outdoor facilities for their exercise programs and recreational activities. Outdoors, it also uses the 'Trillium Trail' of 16 exercise stations with each station providing a specific type of exercise.

According to Mr. Massey, "the social aspects of the fitness programs are very important and we carry this over to include social and special events that all can enjoy." These include employee fitness luncheons held at the local country club with guest speakers who talk about fitness and related topics. Another element is the presentation of trophies — all in good fun — to the Fitness Participants of the Month.

WHY

While more than 80 per cent of us believe that fitness is important and are either thinking about becoming active or are involved in physical activity, we underestimate the importance of fitness.

Just consider the ramifications of inactivity:

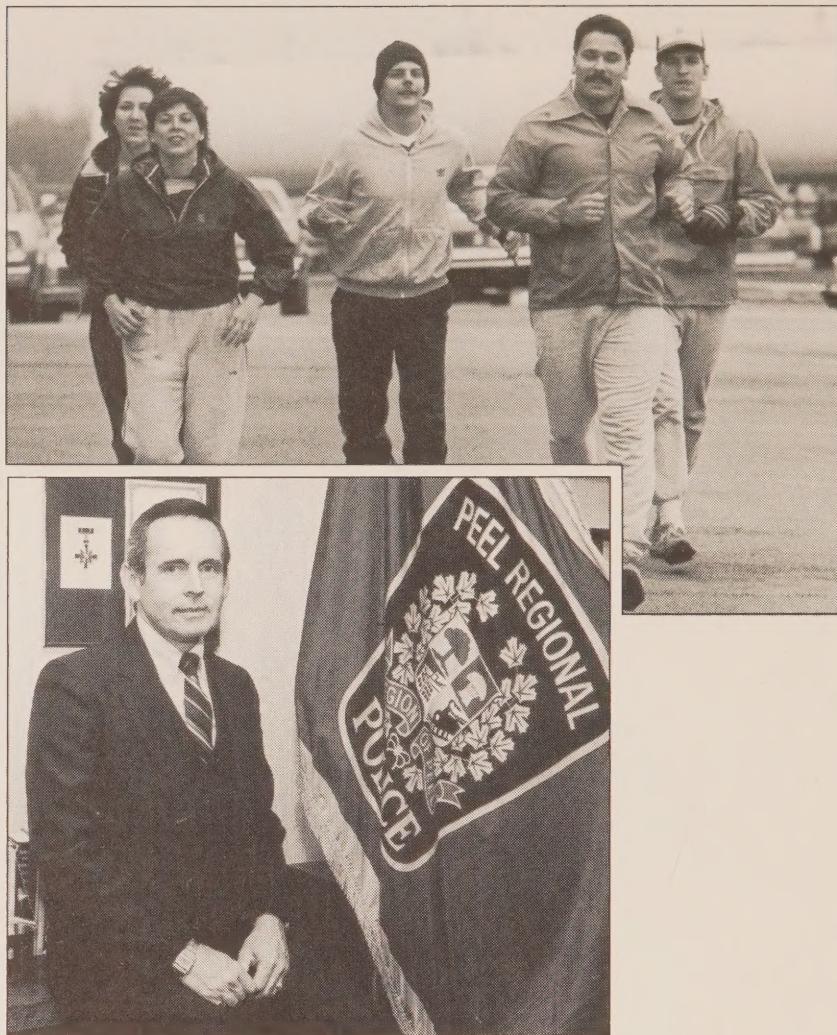
- Inactivity is one of the contributing factors to high blood pressure, fatigue, premature aging.
- Inactivity causes poor muscle tone, which can directly lead to lower back pain and injury.
- Inactivity promotes weight problems, heightens mental tension, both of which may lead to coronary heart disease.

Translated into dollars and time, the significance of inactivity, or unfitness, is staggering. For example:

- Health and Welfare Canada reports that medical costs associated with diseases relating to lifestyle exceeds \$2.76 billion a year.
- Over \$9 billion annually is lost in time and salaries by executives whose health is adversely affected by illness stemming from lack of fitness.
- 745 million production hours were lost at a cost of \$3.8 billion in 1975 across Canada due to lifestyle related illness.
- In 1979, the cost of absenteeism in Canada was \$4.9 billion, 25 times more than the economic loss attributed to labour disputes.
- In Ontario, OHIP could save \$31 million each year in health care costs if residents had an average level of physical fitness, according to the 1976 Quasar study.
- Research at Canada Life Assurance Co. shows that the cost of hiring and training a new supervisory level employee is about \$8,600.
- A U.S. study indicates that to replace a top executive can cost as much as \$600,000.

The point is that well-being — fitness — can help to reduce substantially personal illness, both physical and emotional. Fit employees tend to be ill less often and appear to be able to recover more quickly. As well, efficiency and productivity increase as more energetic, alert and enthusiastic employees are less prone to accidents. That means a healthier, more involved workforce.

And that means a healthier, more productive company.



Peel Regional Police

Hey! Be careful out there." Long-time devotees of *Hill Street Blues*, TV's most popular police program, will fondly recall the unvarying final admonition of the loveable Sergeant Esterhaus as he finished morning briefing and dismissed his regulars to renew their daily battle against crime in the big city, U.S.A. The good sergeant is gone now, but the kind of concern he showed for the well-being of his colleagues has its real life counterpart in the hearts and minds of police officials everywhere.

One such individual is Peel Regional Police Chief Douglas K. Burrows who knows all too well that "out there" can be a very dangerous world for the men and women who serve under him.

A firm believer in fitness as an invisible weapon, the chief maintains that the ability to react quickly, physically and mentally, can be critically important in a life and death situation. "We feel that the more fit police officers are, the less chance there is they will sustain injury," he says.

Burrows, and fellow officers who share his feelings about fitness, were gratified when Peel Regional Council and Peel Regional Board of Commissioners of Police voted to include full gymnasium facilities in the new police headquarters at Brampton, completed in 1981. The Police Commission also agreed to hire a full-time fitness coordinator who now has a wide range of responsibilities.

Recognizing physical demands, prospective recruits must pass a variety of fitness tests before being accepted as cadets. Tests measure aerobic capacity, anaerobic capacity, muscular strength, endurance and percentage of body fat. Successful candidates are required to undergo reassessments five times during their 18-month probationary period.

New recruits and veteran officers alike are encouraged to follow personalized

fitness programs (under the coordinator's direction) designed to be carried out at home as well as in the gym.

According to Chief Burrows, acceptance has reached a high level and cop-outs are few. "We now have classes for all staff and encourage them to participate," says the chief. "About 75 per cent of our staff are now involved."

In addition to planning and supervising individual training programs, the fitness coordinator directs a variety of team sports such as volleyball, baseball, badminton and floor hockey. Those who enjoy more serious competition may vie for a place on one of the Peel Regional Police teams which match skills with other police forces across the country.

When it comes to fitness, Chief Burrows is a firm believer in the golden rule, and faithfully works out at least three times a week. The chief is also an enthusiastic participant in FitFive and is one of the few of over 200 officers taking part in the program to pass level 5.

WHERE

You can help your employees achieve an improved level of well-being by encouraging fitness activities.

This can be done a number of ways, both at the workplace and away from it.

The cost of implementing a program is variable since much depends on the format selected.

The important thing is to do something.

You can:

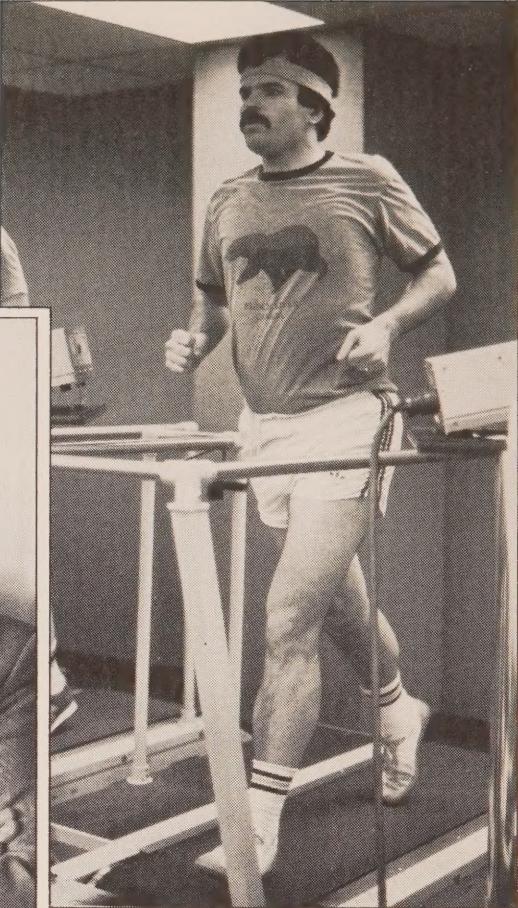
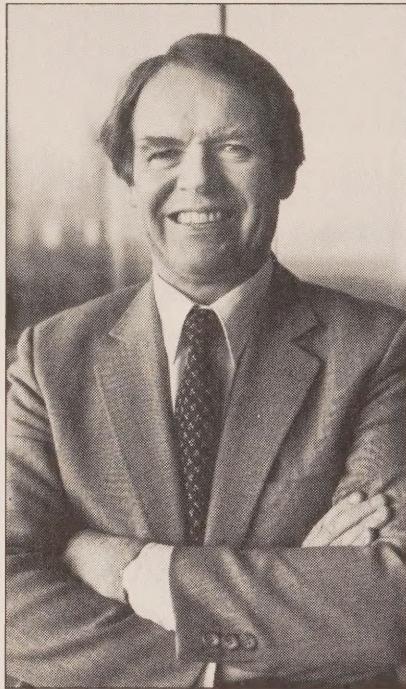
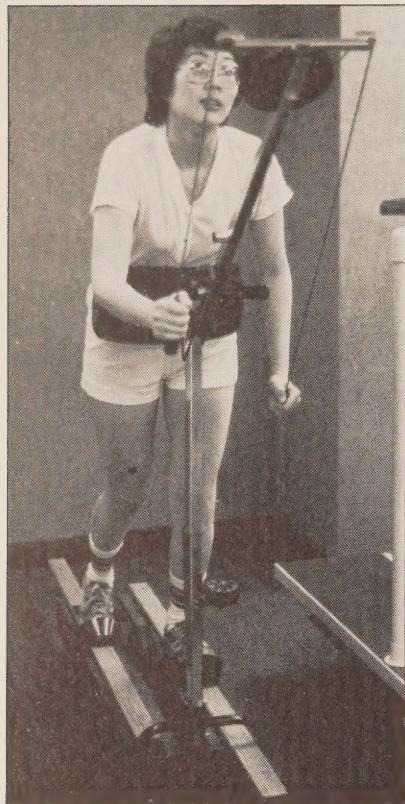
- Introduce a personal fitness program and encourage adherence with posters, newsletter stories, pay envelope stuffers, incentives, contests, and teams in organized sports leagues. This requires no special space at the workplace.
- Designate an employee to be fitness leader who, with proper training, can advise and encourage fellow employees on many aspects of fitness.
- Retain a professional fitness leader who advises you, and perhaps leads group fitness classes on a regular basis with different levels to reflect the needs of groups of employees. This can be done in any open space or empty room; in a meeting hall, cafeteria, or, in warm weather, outdoors. (Naturally, change and shower facilities would be desirable, although not mandatory.)
- Pay for or subsidize employee enrolment in recognized fitness programs or health clubs.
- Use existing space, remodel or build your own fitness facility, which can be as simple or comprehensive as your budget allows.

Location of a fitness program or facility is an important consideration. It should be as close as possible to the worksite since employees should be able to partake in a fitness program and be back to their worksites in under one hour. This is particularly relevant when mid-day programs are offered.

Any program designed to improve overall fitness levels will require moderate activity for between 20 and 30 minutes. Ideally, change facilities — and, where possible, showers and lockers — should be provided. As a matter of fact, successful programs showing marked reduction in employee absenteeism and turnover include change and shower facilities at the worksite.

So, as you can see, there are a number of options for on-site or off-site fitness facilities, ranging from free use of community parks to creating a full gym with change areas.

What matters most, though, is to offer some type of fitness-oriented program. It matters to the welfare of your employees...and in the long run, to the welfare of your business.



Ontario Hydro

The hardest part of fitness is just getting started," says Bob Wilson, Director of the Health and Safety Division for Ontario Hydro. "So, we began a fitness program (at University Avenue complex in Toronto) designed to help our employees get over that very difficult part—starting."

To help their employees get on the fitness track, Ontario Hydro encourages them to join their six-month fitness motivation program. In the program, participants follow a structured exercise routine, using Ontario Hydro's equipment, which includes treadmills, bicycles, cross-country ski exercisers and a weight lifting machine.

"Bob (Wilson) sold the program, which stresses cardiovascular fitness, on the basis that it could help prevent heart disease," says Tom Knezevich, Fitness Specialist, Health and Safety Division. "The idea behind it is to take 150 people (per six-month session) who are not that active and help them look and feel better so they want to exercise and stay fit for the rest of their lives. Most employees leave this program at a good-to-excellent level of fitness."

To date, 1,800 Ontario Hydro workers have participated in the program, which initially began as a two-year pilot project in the fall of 1979.

Does the fitness motivation program work? "Yes," says Mr. Knezevich, "both on paper and on people!"

"An intense follow-up survey has not been done," he says, "but we have done some research and found that 50 percent of those who have taken part say they are still exercising or are doing more now than they did before. That's great!"

But, what Mr. Knezevich finds even more encouraging are the results he sees every day with the people in the program.

"People come in here and they're overweight and quiet. Then they lose weight and they're happy about that. They feel stronger, more confident, have a better self image. All of those things transfer over into the job. The quiet ones start talking—I've seen some real personality changes."

"I think the program works well," says Mr. Wilson. "It's cost efficient for us and the employee." Workers pay a \$70 fee to enter the program, but are reimbursed \$35 if they exercise an average of three days per week.

Mr. Wilson also notes that it is a much needed program. "Employee health is a shared responsibility, and everyone benefits from employee fitness."

Another unique aspect of the Ontario Hydro program is that employees do their workouts during work hours, making up the time before or after work or during their lunch hours.

Mr. Knezevich says the system works well. "The employees are on flexible work hours so it's easy for them to adjust their hours. And, I've never seen anyone take advantage of the system."

At the completion of the six-month program, Mr. Knezevich says he and the participants meet. "This meeting is an important part of the program. We give them tips on how to maintain their fitness level." Ontario Hydro also secures discounts whenever possible at various fitness centres to encourage employees to stay fit.

WHEN

There is a common misconception about our quest for fitness. It is that fitness requires an extraordinary amount of time — both to achieve and maintain. And that fitness requires expensive and costly equipment.

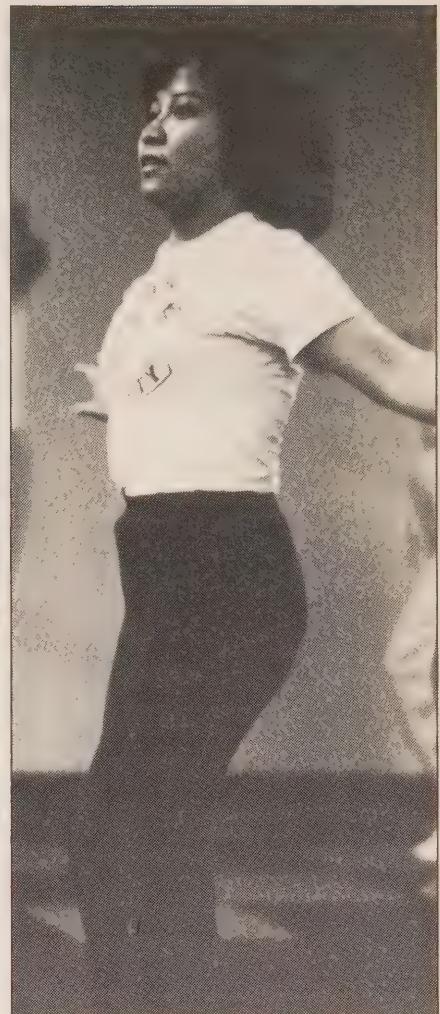
Truth of the matter is that a good level of fitness can be maintained if we're physically active just 30 minutes, three times a week. Of course, if we want to help ourselves most, physical activity should be fairly concentrated so that the heart and lungs can derive the most benefit.

What is really required is opportunity, commitment and motivation in the workplace. One important way to help generate involvement is to offer fitness programs and activities to suit employee work schedules. As a result, most programs should take place before work, during lunch breaks, or after work.

One of the key factors in the success of an employee fitness program is to respond to employee needs, so that they can devote sufficient time to a fitness program.

Chances are, if they have an opportunity to participate, they will.

However, there is something else that must be remembered. Fitness programs are seldom instant successes and the majority of employees rarely become involved at the outset. To be truly successful, any fitness program requires time and attention.



Ministry of Transportation and Communications

Volunteers are the key to the success of the "Keep Fit" program for employees of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications complex in Downsview.

Prompted by a group of interested employees at MTC, an eight week pilot program was undertaken in 1976, followed by a random survey, to determine interest in an on-site fitness program. In October 1977, "Keep Fit" began, administered by individuals with a personal commitment to physical fitness, in a former storage room of the complex. This room is now equipped with mats, skipping ropes and a stereo system to accommodate the enthusiastic groups who take part in the program.

The employee-sponsored fitness program, which focusses on group exercise classes at noon, is coordinated by Marjorie Culver and a committee of three which is responsible for publicity, registration of participants, collection of fees and record keeping — all on their own time.

"We ordinarily have two one-half hour lunch period fitness classes four days a week, and although we currently have 64 employees enrolled in the program, we have had as many as 110 people," says Mrs. Culver. "Our classes allow people to go at their own speed and modify activities to meet personal needs constantly stressing the health and safety aspects of the program."

The "Keep Fit" classes are active and lively and according to the fitness instructor, "Everyone takes part for their own personal reasons. It's not only the

physical activity but also mental stimulation; some participants just want to get away from their desks. Each class is different — one is more social whereas the second class is more strenuous, however, they both draw people out."

Employees are kept informed about the "Keep Fit" program and upcoming sessions by posters and through the Ministry newsletter but the most effective vehicle for stimulating interest is "word of mouth," notes Mrs. Culver.

Mrs. Culver and her "Keep Fit" Committee have worked hard to ensure the success of the project and their effort was acknowledged when they received an evaluation conducted by George Brown College, which gave top marks to the MTC program content and facilities.

HOW

There are several important components in developing, introducing and operating a successful fitness program. They are elements that are common to any program, regardless of its simplicity or complexity, and whether you have an on-site formal fitness facility or not.

- **Management commitment** and participation is the backbone of any good program. Ideally, members of the senior management group will not only be enthusiastic about a fitness program, but will participate. As a result, they will both set an example and they will benefit personally.
- It is essential at the outset to establish a **fitness committee**, comprised of management and employee representatives. To work most effectively, it should not have more than eight members. The committee's role is to generate program parameters, foster employee interest, pride and participation, and to maintain and improve a fitness facility.
- Early on, it is important to **survey employee** interests, needs and expectations. Their response will significantly influence the structuring of a program. Such a survey can be carried out by the fitness committee through existing employee communications tools.
- Another important ingredient is **leadership**. In most cases, a leader naturally emerges (unless assigned), and tends to be one who has a keen interest in fitness for any one of a number of good reasons. Or, you may elect to retain a part- or full-time qualified director who can add an extra dimension of depth and professionalism. Either way, you will want to ensure that the program you do offer is safe, beneficial and accessible.

Fitness Ontario, a unit of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, offers a fitness leadership training program available through community agencies. The training program provides professional instruction to employees who wish to become volunteer fitness leaders in their organizations.

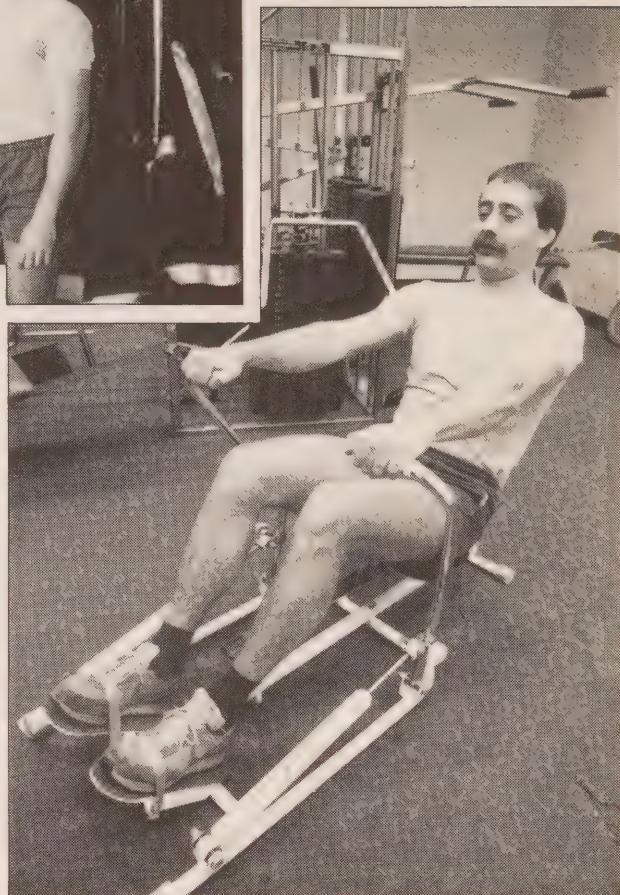
Fitness Ontario also has developed and tested an effective personal fitness program that is available to companies at no cost.

Called FitFive, it is an easy-to-follow program that encourages physical activity at a participant's own pace, monitors activity and offers helpful hints on all aspects of fitness.

It is supported by display units, posters, charts and a special implementation manual.

It costs nothing to implement, requires no special time at the workplace and all you have to do is allocate some administrative time to set up and monitor the program.

FitFive is a good first step in generating increased employee awareness of, and interest in, fitness.



City of Gloucester Fire Department

When the bells ring for a fire call, your heart rate and stress rate jump drastically, and there's no time to warm up," says Dan Johncox, City of Gloucester professional fire fighter. "We often carry gear in excess of 40 lbs. and work under adverse conditions. With a high fitness level, we can climb stairs and do the same amount of work with less effort. After the fire is over, our heart rate goes back down much more quickly because we are in good shape."

The nature of a fire fighter's job makes it very important they stay in shape and for this reason, the City of Gloucester constructed a gym in each of its three fire halls. The facilities are open to all fire fighters and city employees. Currently, about 75 employees — or 40 percent of all employees — make use of the facilities, whether it's for a general workout or to use the free weights and universal gym.

"Fitness in our job is a combination of flexibility, muscle strength and good cardio-vascular tone and we use our facilities to maintain and develop these qualities on the job," says Mr. Johncox.

In addition to promoting fitness among his fellow fire fighters, Johncox acts as CPR coordinator for the City of Gloucester, training civic employees in CPR and conducting fitness shows and health fairs in the city and outlying areas.

According to Jock Jardine, director of personnel, for the City of Gloucester, "We try to encourage the fire fighters to make use of the equipment once their regular fire hall duties are complete — they can use it to their hearts' content. It has been a cooperative effort between the fire fighters themselves and the city."

Mr. Jardine explained that when the fitness program began seven years ago, consultants from Carleton University conducted fitness evaluations and stress tests on fire fighters. Consultants then met with each fire fighter to discuss individual strengths and weaknesses and tailor-made programs, to be completed in the fire hall, were established for each individual. Employees are encouraged to return yearly for a check-up and reassessment of their programs.

Testing is now compulsory for prospective recruits. To be accepted, candidates must demonstrate a high level of fitness and maintain that level during their first year of employment.

"The city recognizes that there is more to fitness than just brute strength," says Mr. Jardine."

WHO

Fitness Ontario has a full-time Employee Fitness Coordinator who will be pleased to visit with you and your associates...to review your needs; to advise on the best, most cost-efficient means of planning, launching or enhancing a fitness program.

After early developmental counselling, Fitness Ontario's role is to simply "keep in touch" as required.

In addition, Fitness Ontario can offer assistance in resource needs and, in cases that qualify, with Wintario financial assistance.

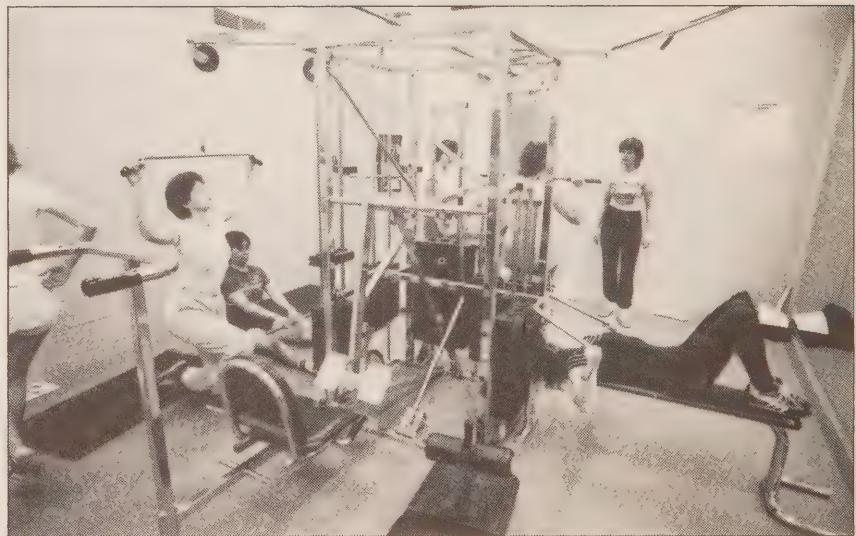
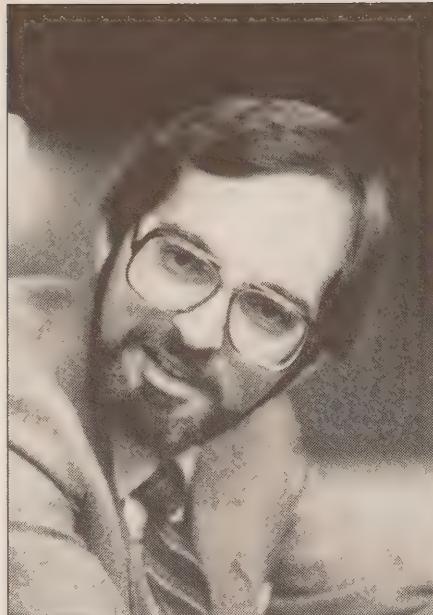
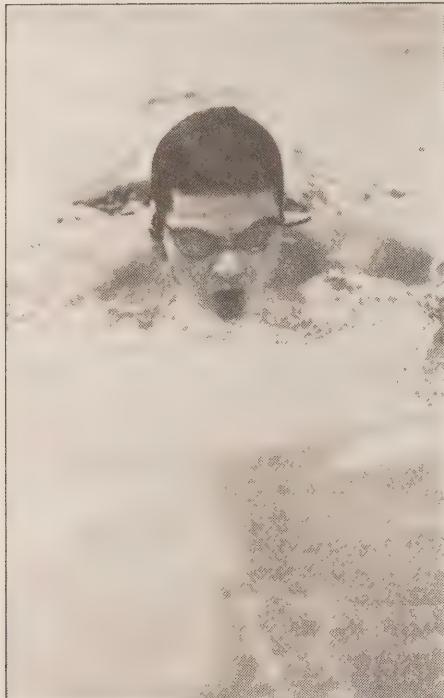
As well, the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation's regional program staff are also able to provide counsel and help monitor programs.

Of course, there are also independent consultants and recognized fitness organizations qualified to help you.

Much will depend on how a fitness program is structured and introduced.

So please feel free to contact us.

After all, it's a matter of good health.



Toronto General Hospital

Toronto General Hospital has taken a step in the right direction for the entire hospital community," says Employees Fitness Coordinator Gwen Binsfeld of the Fitness Centre located in the Nurses' Residence Building.

The new fitness complex opened in April 1983, utilizing the existing 10-year old facility with major renovations. An exercise room and change rooms were added, new equipment purchased. Today, the centre houses a large gym used for badminton, basketball, tennis and volleyball, as well as for fitness classes. There are squash courts, a weight room and a pool for aquatics, swimming instruction or a leisurely dip. Extramural programs include conditioning for skiers and marathon training.

Says Corby Hamilton, Toronto General Hospital Director of Personnel, "Our employees have membership priority in our facility but remaining space is available to neighbouring hospitals as well as the general public. After 10 months of operation we have approximately 1,100 members — around 650 from Toronto General — with a high proportion over the age of 40. The Fitness Centre operation is completely self-supporting, funded by membership revenues. However, the Fitness Centre would not be here and operating successfully if it had not been for the support of our senior executive group and the advice and assistance we received from Wintario."

Mr. Hamilton offers this advice to organizations contemplating an employees fitness centre: "Don't plan to be in the black in the first year. Marketing and building a stable membership base are the keys to success. It may take three to five years to become completely self-supporting."

"Apart from improvements in employee morale and attendance, the provision of an environment where friendships can grow through employee participation is probably the greatest benefit for our organization."

The Fitness Centre is staffed by a full-time administrative assistant, part-time fitness coordinator and approximately 12 instructors. A volunteer leadership program is being developed to meet growing needs.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Eight documented employee fitness benefits that affect any organization are:

- less illness and fewer accidents
- reduced turnover
- generally better attitude towards work
- better ability to cope with stress
- better relationships in the workplace
- fewer days of work missed
- a tendency to improve personal health habits
- overall more enjoyment out of life

That means employees who are in better physical condition, coping more effectively with their careers and the tensions of modern life. And that means more productivity.

Return on investment in employee fitness can be documented, and costs of economic benefits of an employee fitness program can be calculated with reasonable accuracy.

Our attitudes towards fitness have changed dramatically during the past decade. Whereas for too long too many had a cavalier attitude about their own physical well-being, today we realize that fitness is an important factor in all facets of our lives.

By offering employees an opportunity to improve their level of fitness, regardless of the nature of the program, everyone benefits in every imaginable way.

Please think about it. Seriously.

And then pledge that for the good of your employees, and the company, you'll take the first step.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Fitness Ontario
Ministry of Tourism and Recreation
77 Bloor Street West, 8th Floor,
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2R9
(416) 965-6311

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Ministry of
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Fitness Ontario